

to kill Medicare. The American people know exactly what the Republicans are doing.

The Republican plan is to cut \$270 billion out of Medicare to pay for a tax cut for the rich. Because of this, seniors' premiums will be increased, seniors will be put out of nursing homes, medical services will decrease, drug costs will increase. Finally, Madam Speaker, under the Republican plan, the elderly will die prematurely.

America must reject this cold, this cruel, and this heartless Republican plan to kill Medicare.

#### APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL CONFEREES ON S. 440, NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM DESIGNATION ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WALDHOLTZ). Without objection, the Chair appoints the following additional conferees on the Senate bill (S. 440) to amend title 23, United States Code, to provide for the designation of the National Highway System, and for other purposes.

As additional conferees for the consideration of sections 105 and 141 of the Senate bill, and section 320 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. BLILEY, BILIRAKIS, BARTON of Texas, GREENWOOD, DINGELL, WAXMAN, and BROWN of Ohio.

As additional conferees for the consideration of section 157 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. YOUNG of Alaska, HANSEN, and MILLER of California.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will notify the Senate of the change in conferees.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1977, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

Mr. REGULA. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 231, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 1977), making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUNNING). Pursuant to the rule, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of September 21, 1995, at page H9431.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio [Mr. REGULA] will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. YATES] will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. REGULA].

(Mr. REGULA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with somewhat mixed emotions. I had hoped to bring my first Interior appropriations conference agreement, as chairman, to the floor with unqualified support. Unfortunately, there are some divisions among conferees as you will note from the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, the essence of democracy is compromise. In my 9 months as chairman I have learned that our form of government is truly a democracy, and I would not change that. Despite that fact, I, like many of our conferees, am not happy with every provision in the bill. However, the conference agreement before you today is an excellent example of how we on the Committee on Appropriations have taken our pledge to balance the budget very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before you today charts a new course, a fiscally responsible course, but a course which also provides for the protection and enhancement of our public lands, preserves the critical science and research capabilities, and maintains health and education programs for native Americans and, I would add, very important, respects private property rights.

While I believe this bill is fiscally very responsible and represents common sense, the action of the conferees with respect to mining is in direct opposition to the views of a bipartisan majority of this body, as was evident by the vote on the Klug amendment. I understand there will probably be a motion to recommit and each Member will have to make his or her own decision on the mining policy issue.

Mr. Speaker, the bill is 10 percent, or \$1.4 billion below 1995 spending levels. This represents real savings, both now and in the future. By not starting new programs or construction, we save costs in future years. The bill terminates agencies and programs and puts others on notice that Federal funding will terminate in the near future. This bill is not business as usual.

We are not cutting at the margins with the hopes that we can keep programs on life support until more money becomes available in the future. Instead, we have terminated lower priority initiatives to provide scarce resources to meet the many critical needs of our public lands, to ensure quality health and education for native Americans and to promote quality science and research in energy and public land management.

Specifically, four agencies are eliminated: the National Biological Service; Bureau of Mines; DOE's Office of Emergency Preparedness; and Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. In addition, more than 35 individual programs have been eliminated.

With respect to the National Biological Service, an issue of some interest to many in this body, let me reiterate that the NBS has been eliminated. However, as many agreed, the core nat-

ural resource research activities, critical to responsible stewardship of our public lands, has been preserved and will be carried out by what is widely recognized as the premier unbiased, credible, specific agency, the U.S. Geological Survey.

This will ensure that critical research, critical scientific information will continue, and that it will be conducted independent of regulatory influence or agendas and will ensure scientific excellence.

In keeping with our commitment to reduce spending, we have also cut funding for this activity by 15 percent.

□ 1045

As to the endangered species program, we are waiting on the authorizing committee inasmuch as the authorization for the Endangered Species Act has expired and we hope that the Committee on Resources will bring out a bill. The appropriation recognizes that we are waiting for that action.

The National Endowment for the Arts is funded at the House-passed level of \$99.5 million. The statement of the managers also makes it clear that it is the intent of the House to terminate Federal support for the NEA after fiscal year 1997. Again, this is consistent with the authorizing bill that has come out of the committee of jurisdiction.

Funding for land acquisition, as in the House-passed bill, is not earmarked and is funded at 40 percent below last year's funding levels. This ensures that the limited funding will be directed only to high priority projects for the four land management agencies. If there is a critical piece of land, there will be funding available, but we do no earmarking.

Contrary to what Members may have read in their local press, passage of this bill will not force the closure of one single national park or recreation area. No park will be forced to close under this agreement, as funding for park operations is over 1995 levels by \$5 million. I would point out that this is in the face of a 10-percent reduction overall. We have kept the funding for those agencies, those facilities where the public interfaces at pretty much 1995 levels in terms of operations. In the case of the parks, it is \$5 million over 1995. There certainly is not reason whatsoever to close any park.

To achieve that, increased savings were made in lower priority park programs such as land acquisition and construction. Those things are nice to do, but we did not have the funding to achieve that. Initially, I tried to divide the responsibilities into three categories, must-do's, need-to-do's and nice-to-do's. Some of these are nice to do, but we had to take care of the must-do's.

Construction has been reduced by more than 14 percent, and land acquisition is down nearly 44 percent. Overall—and that is including every dimension of the park activity—funding is